THE PLEASURES OF A Single LIFE, OR, THE MISERIES OF MATRIMONY.

Occasionally Writ

Upon the many DIVORCES lately Granted by Parliament.

The Second Edition.

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MATRIMONY

THE PLEASURES OF A Single Life, &c.

WEdlock, Oh! Curſs'd uncomfortable State,
Cauſe of my Woes, and Object of my hate.
How bleſs'd was I? Ah, once how happy me?
When I from thoſe uneaſy Bonds was free,
How Calm my Joys? How Peaceful was my Breaſt,
Till with thy fatal Cares too ſoon oppreſt,
The World ſeem'd Paradice, ſo bleſs'd the Soil
Wherein I liv'd, that Buſineſs was no toil;
Life was a comfort, which produc'd each day
New Joys, that ſtill preſerv'd me from decay.
Thus Heav'n firſt launch'd me 'nto pacifick Seas,
Where, free from Storms, I mov'd with gentle breeze;
My Sails proportion'd, and my Veſſel tite,
Coaſting in pleaſure's Bay I ſteer'd aright,
Ballac'd with true Content, and freighted with Delight.

Books my Companions were, wherein I found
Needful Advice, without a noiſy Sound,
But was with friendly, pleaſing Silence taught,
Wiſdoms beſt Rules, to fructify my Thought.
Rais'd up our Sage Fore-fathers from the dead,
And when I pleas'd invok'd 'em to my Aid,
Who at my Study-Bar without a Fee would plead:
Whilſt I Chief Juſtice ſat, heard all their Sutes,
And gave my Judgment on their learn'd Diſputes;
Strove to determine ev'ry Cauſe aright,
And for my pains found Profit and Delight.

Free from Partiality, I fear'd no Blame,
Deſir'd no Brib'ry, and deſerv'd no Shame.
But like an upright Judge grudg'd no Expence
Of time, to fathom Truth with diligence,
Reading by Day, Contemplating by Night,
'Till Conſcience told me that I judg'd aright.

Then to my Paper-World I'd have recourſe,
And by my Maps run o're the Univerſe;
Sail round the Globe, and touch at ev'ry Port,
Survey thoſe Shoars where Men untam'd reſort;
View the old Regions where the *Perſian* Lord,
Taught Wooden Dieties firſt to be Ador'd,
Enſnar'd at laſt to Sacrifice his Life,
To the baſe Pride of an Adult'rous Wife,
And where the *Grecian* Youth to Arms inur'd,
The hungry Soil with *Perſian* Blood manur'd,
Where bold *Buceph'lus* brutal Conduct ſhow'd,
The force of monſtrous Elephants withſtood,
And with his Rider waded thro' a Purple Flood.

Then would I next the *Roman* Fields ſurvey,
Where brave *Fabricius* with his Army lay;
Fam'd for his Valour, from Corruption free,
Made up of Courage and Humility.
That when Encamp'd the Good-man lowly bent,
Cook'd his own Cabbage in his homely Tent:
And when the *Samaites* ſent a Golden Sum,
To tempt him to betray his Country *Rome.*
The Droſs he ſcoffingly return'd untold,
And Anſwer'd with a Look ſerenely bold,
That *Roman* Sprouts would boil without their *Grecian* Gold.
Then eat his Cale-worts for his Meal deſign'd,
And beat the *Grecian* Army when he'd din'd.

Thus would I range the World from Pole to Pole,
To'ncreaſe my Knowledge, and delight my Soul;
Travel all Nations, and inform my Senſe,
With eaſe and ſafety, at a ſmall Expence:
No Storms to Plough, no Paſſengers-Sums to pay,
No Horſe to hire, or Guide to ſhow the way;

No *Alps* to climb, no Deſerts here to paſs,
No Ambuſcades, no Thief to give me Chaſe;
No Bare to dread, or rav'nous Wolf to fight,
No Flies to ſting, no Rattle-Snakes to bite;
No Floods to Ford, no Hurricans to fear,
No dreadful Thunder to ſurprize the Ear;
No VVinds to freeze, no Sun to ſcorch or fry,
No Thirſt, or Hunger, and Relief not nigh.
All theſe Fatigues and Miſchiefs could I ſhun;
Reſt when I pleas'd, and when I pleas'd Jog on,
And Travel thro' both *Indies* in an Afternoon.

When the Day thus far pleaſingly was ſpent,
And every Hour adminiſter'd Content,
Then would I range the Fields, and flowry Meads,
Where Nature her exub'rant Bounty ſpreads,
In whoſe delightful Products does appear,
Inimitable Beauty ev'ry where;
Contemplate on each Plant, and uſeful Weed,
And how its form firſt lay involv'd in Seed;
How they're preſerv'd by Providential Care;
For what deſign'd, and what their Virtues are.
Thus to my Mind by dint of Reaſon prove,
That all below is Ow'd to Heav'n above,
And that no Earthly Temporals can be,
But what muſt Center in Eternitie.
Then gaze aloft whence all things had their Birth,
And mount my prying Soul 'twixt Heav'n and Earth,
Thus the ſweet Harmony oth' whole admire,
And by due ſearch new Learning ſtill acquire,
So nearer ev'ry day to Truths divine aſpire.

When tir'd with thought then from my Pocket pluck,
Some Friendly dear Companion of a Book,
Whoſe homely Calves-Skin fences did contain
The Verbal Treaſures of ſome Old Good Man:
Made by long ſtudy and Experience wiſe,
Whoſe piercing Thoughts to Heav'nly knowledge riſe,
Amongſt whoſe Pious Reliques I could find,
Rules for my Life, Rich Banquets for my mind,
Such pleaſing Nectar, ſuch Eternal food,
That well digeſted makes a Man a God,

And for his uſe at the ſame time prepares,
On Earth a Heav'n in ſpight of Worldy Cares.
The day in theſe Enjoyments would I ſpend,
But chuſe at night my Bottle and my Friend,
Took prudent Care that neither were abus'd,
But with due moderation both I us'd.
And in one ſober Pint found more delight,
Than the inſatiate Sot that ſwills all Night:
Ne're drown my Sences, or my Soul debaſe,
Or drink beyond the reliſh of my Glaſs,
For in exceſs good Heav'ns deſign is Croſt,
In all extreams the true enjoyments loſt:
Wine chears the Heart and elevates the Soul,
But if we ſurfit with too large a Bowl,
Wanting true Aim we th' happy Mark o're ſhoot,
And change the heav'nly Image to a Brute.
So the great *Grecian* who the World ſubdu'd,
And drown'd whole Nations in a Sea of Blood;
At laſt was conquer'd by th' pow'r of Wine,
And dy'd a Drunken Victim to the Vine.
My Friend, and I, when o're our Bottle ſat,
Mix'd with each Glaſs ſome inoffenſive Chat,
Talk'd of the World's Affairs, but ſtill kept free
From Paſſion, Zeal, or Partiality;
With honeſt Freedom did our Thoughts diſpence,
And judg'd of all things with indifference;
Till time at laſt did our delights invade,
And in due ſeaſon ſeparation made.
Then without Envy, Diſcord, or Deceit,
Part like true Friends as loving as we met;
The Tavern change to a Domeſtick Scene,
That ſweet Retirement, tho' it's ne're ſo mean.
Thus leave each other in a chearful Plight,
T' enjoy the ſilent Pleaſures of the Night.
When home return'd, my Thanks to Heaven pay,
For all the paſt kind Bleſſings of the Day;
No haughty help-mate to my Peace moleſt,
No treacherous Snake to harbour in my Breaſt;
No fawning Miſtreſs of the Female Art,
With *Judas* Kiſſes to betray my Heart;
No light-tail'd Hypocrite to raiſe my Fears;
No vile Impert'nence to torment my Ears;

No

No motled Off-ſpring to diſturb my Thought,
In Wedlock Born, but G--d knows where begot;
No luſtful *Maſſalina*, to require
Whole Troops of Men to feed her Brutal Fire;
No Family Cares my quiet to diſturb;
No head ſtrong Humours to aſſwage, or curb;
No Jarring Servants, no Domeſtick Strife,
No Jilt, no Termagent, no faithleſs Wife,
With Vinegar, or Gall, to ſowr or bitter Life,

Thus freed from all that could my mind annoy
Alone my ſelf, I did my ſelf enjoy:
When Nature call'd, I laid me down to reſt,
With a Sound Body, and a Peaceful Breaſt:
Hours of Repoſe with conſtancy I kept,
And Guardian Angels watch'd me as I ſlept,
In lively Dreams reviving as I lay,
The Pleaſures of the laſt precedent Day:
Thus whilſt I ſingly Liv'd did I poſſeſs,
By day and night inceſſent Happineſs,
Content enjoy'd awak'd, and ſleeping found no leſs.

But the curs'd Fiend, from Hell's dire Regions ſent,
Ranging the World to Man's Deſtruction bent;
VVho with an envious Pride beholding me,
Advanc'd by Virtue to Felicity,
Reſolv'd his own Eternal wretched State,
Should be in part reveng'd by my ſad Fate;
And to at once my happy Life betray,
Flung VVoman, faithleſs VVoman, in my way:
Beauty ſhe had, a ſeeming modeſt Mien;
All Charms without, but Devil all within;
VVhich did not yet appear, but lurk'd, alas, unſeen.
A fair Complexion far exceeding Paint,
Black ſleepy Eyes that would have charm'd a Saint;
Her lips ſo ſoft and ſweet that ev'ry Kiſs,
Seem'd a ſhort Taſt of the Eternal Bliſs;
Her ſet of Teeth ſo regular and white,
They'd ſhow their Luſtre in the Darkeſt Night;
Round her Seraphick Face, ſo fair and young,
Her Sable Hair in careleſs Dreſſes hung,
VVhich added to her beautious Features ſhow'd
Like ſome fair Angel peeping thro' a Cloud!

Her Breasts, her Hands, na! ev'ry Charm so bright,
She seem'd a Sun by Day, a Moon by Night:
Her shape so ravishing, that ev'ry part,
Proportion'd was to th' nicest Rules of Art;
So awful was her Carriage when she mov'd,
None could behold her but he fear'd and lov'd,
She Danc'd well, Sung well, finely plaid the Lute,
VVas always VVitty in her VVords, or Mute;
Obliging not reserv'd, nor yet too free,
But as a Maid divinely bless'd should be;
Not vainly gay, but decent in Attire,
She seem'd so Good she could no more acquire
Of Heaven, than what she had, and Man no more desire.
Fortune, like God and Nature too, was kind,
And to these Gifts a copious Sum had join'd.
VVho could the Power of such Temptations shun,
VVhat frozen *Cynic* from her Charms could run?
VVhat Cloister'd Monk could see a Face so bright,
But quit his Beads, and follow Beauty's light,
And by its Lustre hope to shun Eternal Night.
I so bewitch'd, and Poyson'd with her Charms,
Believ'd the outmost Heav'n was in her Arms.
Methoughts the goodness in her Eyes I see,
Spoke her the Off-spring of some Deitie.
Now Books and VValks would no Content afford,
She was the only Good to be ador'd;
In her fair Looks alone delight I found,
Love's raging Storms all other joys had drown'd.
By Beauty's *Ignis Fatuus* led astray,
Bound for Content I lost my happy Way,
Of Reasons faithful Pilot now bereft,
Was amongst Rocks and Shelves in danger left.
There must have perish'd, as I fondly thought,
Lest her kind Usage my Salvation wrought;
Her happy Aid I labour'd to obtain,
Hop'd for Success, yet fear'd her sad Disdain.
Tortur'd like dying Convicts whilst they live
'Twixt fear of Death, and hopes of a Reprieve.
First for her smallest Favours did I sue,
Crept, Fawn'd and Cring'd as Lovers us'd to do?
Sigh'd e'er I spoke, and when I spoke look'd pale,
In words confus'd discloss'd my mournful Tale?
Unpractic'd in Amour's fine Speeches coin'd,
But could not utter what I well design'd.
Warm'd by her Charms 'gainst bashfulness I strove,
And trembling sat, and stammer'd out my Love;
Told her how greatly I admir'd and fear'd,
Which she 'twixt Coyness and Compassion hear'd,

Grudg'd

Grudg'd no Expence of Money, or of Time,
And thought that not t' adore her was a Crime;
The more each Viſit I acquainted grew,
Yet every time found ſomething in her new.
Who was above her Sex ſo fortunate,
She had a Charm for Man in every ſtate;
Beauty for th' Youthful, Prudence for the Old,
Scripture for th' Godly, for the Miſer, Gold;
Wit for th' Ingenious, Silence for the Grave,
Flatt'ry for th' Fool, and Cunning for the Knave:
Compounded thus of ſuch Varieties,
She had a Knack to every Temper pleaſe,
And as her ſelf thought fit was every one of theſe.

I lov'd, I ſigh'd and vow'd, talk'd, whin'd and pray'd,
And at her Feet my panting heart I lay'd;
She ſmil'd, then frown'd, was now reſerv'd, then free,
And as ſhe plaid her part oft chang'd her Key;
Not thro' fantaſtick Humour but deſign,
To try me throly e'er ſhe ſhould be mine,
Becauſe ſhe wanted in one Man to have
A Husband, Lover, Cuckold, and a Slave.
So Travellers before a Horſe they buy,
His Speed, his Paces, and his Temper try,
Whether he'll anſwer Whip and Spur, thence judge,
If the poor Beaſt will prove a patient Drudge.

When ſhe by Wiles had heightned my deſire,
And fan'd Love's Sparkles to a raging Fire;
Made now for *Wedlock*, or for *Bedlam* fit,
Thus Paſſion gain'd the upper hand of Wit.
The Dame by pitty, or by Intereſt mov'd,
Or elſe by Luſt, pretended now ſhe Lov'd;
After long ſufferings her Conſent I got,
To make me happy, as I hop'd and thought,
But Oh, the wretched Hour I ty'd the *Gordian* Knot.
Thus thro' miſtake I raſhly plung'd my Life,
Into that Gulph of Miſeries a *WIFE.*
With joyful Arms I thus embrac'd my fate,
Believ'd too ſoon, was undeceiv'd too late;
So hair-brain'd Fools to *Indian* Climates rove,
With a vain hope their fortunes to improve;
There ſpend their ſlender Cargoe's, then become
Worſe ſlaves abroad than e're they were at home.

When a few Weeks were waſted I compar'd,
With all due moderation and regard,
My former Freedom, with my new Reſtraint,
Judging which State afforded moſt content,
But found a *Single Life* as calm and gay,
As the delightful Month of Blooming *May*,

Not chill'd with Cold, or Scorch'd with too much Heat,
Not plagu'd with flying Duſt, or drown'd with Wet,
But pleaſing to the Eyes, and to the Noſtrils ſweet,

But Wedlock's like the Bluſtring Month of *March*,
That does the Body's Maims and Bruiſes ſearch,
Brings by Cold niping Storms unwelcome pains,
And finds, or Breeds, Diſtempers in our Veins;
Renews old Sores, and haſtens on decay,
And ſeldom does afford one pleaſant day,
But Clouds diſſolve, or raging Tempeſts blow,
And untile Houſes like the wrangling Shrow;
Thus *March* and *Marriage* juſtly may be ſaid,
To be alike, then ſure the Man is Mad,
That loves ſuch Changling Weather where the beſt is bad.

Tho' I once happy in a Single Life,
Yet Shipwrack'd all upon that Rock a Wife,
By Gold and Beauties Pow'rful Charms betray'd,
To the dull drudgery of a Marriage-Bed:
That Paradice for Fools, a Sport for Boys,
Tireſom its Chains, and brutal are its Joys,
Thou Nauſeous Prieſt-craft that too ſoon appear'd,
Not as I hop'd, but worſe than what I fear'd.
All her ſoft Charms which I believ'd Divine,
Marriage I thought had made them only mine;
Vain hope, alas, for I too early found,
My Brows were with the Thorns of *Wedlock* crown'd.
Jealouſie firſt from Reaſon rais'd a doubt,
And fatal Chance th' unhappy Truth brought out;
Made it ſo plain from all pretences freed,
That wicked Woman no Excuſe could plead;
And if ſhe wants device to hide her ſhame,
Hell can no Umbrage for Adul'try frame.

I thought it Prudence the Diſgrace to hide,
Tho' rav'd and ſtorm'd, ſhe Pardon Beg'd and Cry'd,
Yet with falſe Proteſtations ſtrove to Charm,
The Cuckold to believe ſhe'd done no harm,
Tho' taken by ſurpriſe (O curſe the day)
Where all the Marks of paſt Enjoyment lay,
And ſhe diſorder'd by her luſtful freeks,
Had Shame and Horrour Strugling in her Cheeks:
Yet made Eſſays to clear her Innocence,
And hide her Guilt with Lyes and Impudence;
For luſtful Women like a vicious State,
Oft ſtifle Ills by others full as great.
But I convinc'd too plainly of her Guilt,
All her falſe Oaths and quick Inventions ſpoilt,
Which when ſhe'd us'd in vain ſhe Bluſh'd and Cry'd,
And own'd her fault ſhe found ſhe could not hide.

This I forgave, ſhe promis'd to reclaim,
Vow'd future truth if I'd conceal the ſhame;
But what Strange Adamantine Chain can bind,
Woman Corrupted to be juſt or kind:
Or how can Man to an Adultreſs ſhew
That Love, which to a faithful Wife is due.
I ſtrugl'd hard, and all my Paſſions checkt,
And chang'd Revenge into a Mild Reſpect,
That Good for Ill return'd might touch her near,
And Gratitude might bind her more than Fear;
My former Love I ev'ry day renew'd,
And all the ſignals of Oblivion ſhew'd;
Wink'd at ſmall faults wou'd no ſuch Trifles mind,
As accidental Failings not deſign'd.
I all things to her Temper eaſy made,
Scorn'd to Reflect, and hated to Upbraid;
She choſe (and rich it was) her own Attire,
Nah, had what a Proud Woman could deſire.

Thus the new Covenant I ſtrictly kept,
And oft in private for her Failings wept,
Yet bore with ſeeming Chearfulneſs thoſe cares,
That bring a Man too ſoon to griſled hairs.

But all this kindneſs I diſpens'd in vain,
Where Luſt and baſe Ingratitude remain:
Luſt, which if once in Female fancy fix'd,
Burns like Salt-petre with dry Touchwood mix'd:
And tho' cold Fear for time may ſtop its force,
'Twill ſoon like fire confin'd break out the worſe;
Or like a Tide obſtructed reaſſume its courſe.

No Art could e'er perfume the ſtinking *Stote*,
Or change the leacherous Nature of the *Goate*.
No Skilful Whitſter ever found the ſlight,
To waſh or bleach an *Ethiopian* white.
No gentle Uſage truly will Aſſwage,
A *Tyger*'s fierceneſs, or a *Lyon*'s rage.
Stripes and ſevere Correction is the way,
When once they're thro'ly Conquer'd they'll obey,
'Tis Whip and Spur, Commanding Rein and Bit,
That makes the unruly head-ſtrong Horſe ſubmit.
So ſtubborn faithleſs Woman muſt be us'd,
Or Man by Woman baſely be abus'd.

For after all th' endearments I could ſhow,
At laſt ſhe turn'd both Libertine and Shrow;
From my Submiſſion grew perverſe and proud,
Crabbed as Varges, and as Thunder loud;
Did what ſhe pleas'd, would no Obedience own,
And ridicul'd the patience I had ſhown.

Fear'd no ſharp Threatnings, valu'd no Diſgrace;
But flung the Wrongs ſhe'd done me in my face:
Grew ſtill more head-ſtrong turbulent and Lew'd,
Filling my Manſion with a ſpurious Brood.
Thus Brutal Luſt her humane Reaſon drown'd,
And her looſe Tail oblig'd the Country round;
Advice, Reproof, Pray'rs, Tears, were flung away,
For ſtill ſhe grew more wicked ev'ry day;
Till by her Equals ſcorn'd, my Servants fed
The Brutal Rage of her Adultrous Bed.
Nah, in my abſence trucled to my Groom,
And hug'd the ſervil Traytor in my Room;
VVhen theſe ſtrange Tidings Thunder-ſtruck my Ear,
And ſuch Inhumane VVrongs were made appear,
On theſe juſt Grounds for a Divorce I ſued,
At laſt that head-ſtrong Tyrant VVife ſubdu'd,
Cancel'd the Marriage-bonds, and Baſterdiz'd her Brood.

VVoman, thou worſt of all Church-Plagues, farewel;
Bad at the Beſt, but at the worſt a Hell;
Thou truſs of VVorm-wood, bitter Teaz of Life,
Thou Nurſery of Humane cares a *WIFE.*
Thou Apple-Eating Trayt'riſs, who began
The VVrath of Heav'n, and Miſeries of Man;
And ha'ſt with never-failing diligence,
Improv'd the Curſe to humane Race e'er ſince.
Farewell Church Juggle that enſlav'd my Life,
But bleſs that Pow'r that rid me of my VVife.
And now the Laws once more have ſet me free,
If VVoman can again prevail with me,
My Fleſh and Bones ſhall make my VVedding-Feaſt,
And none ſhall be invited as my Gueſt,
T' attend my *Bride*, but th' *Devil* and a *Prieſt.*

FINIS.